



# **PUBLIC HEALTH**

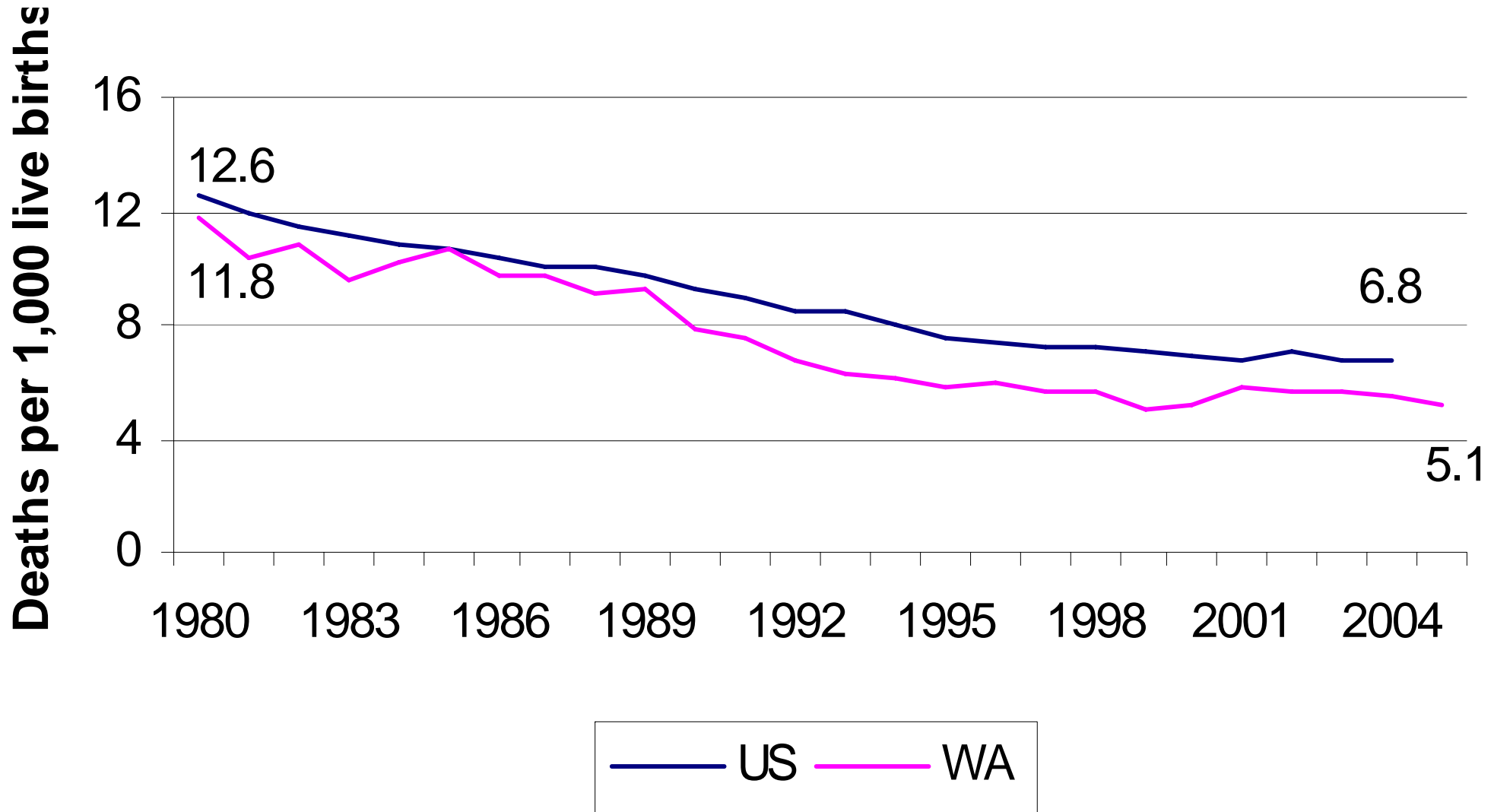
**ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
HEALTHIER WASHINGTON**

Race/Ethnic Disparities in Infant Mortality  
Presentation to Washington State Board of Health  
December 13, 2006

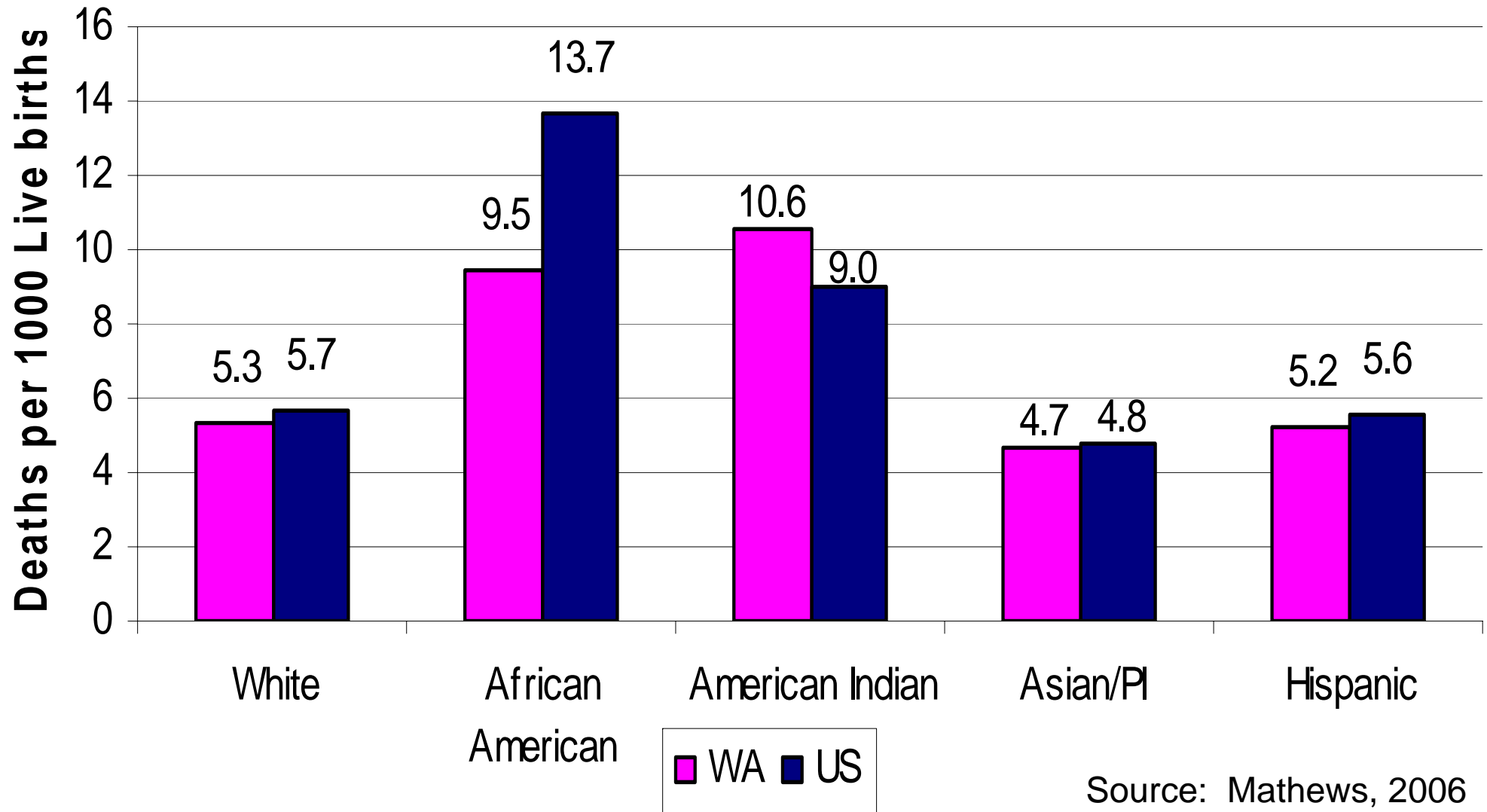
## Objectives

- Describe infant mortality and its risk factors
- Explain US and WA trends in infant mortality, highlighting race/ethnic disparities
- Discuss leading causes of infant mortality along with some public health interventions
- Discuss race/ethnic disparities in infant mortality and their relation to risk factors and interventions

# Infant Mortality Rates WA and US, 1980-2005

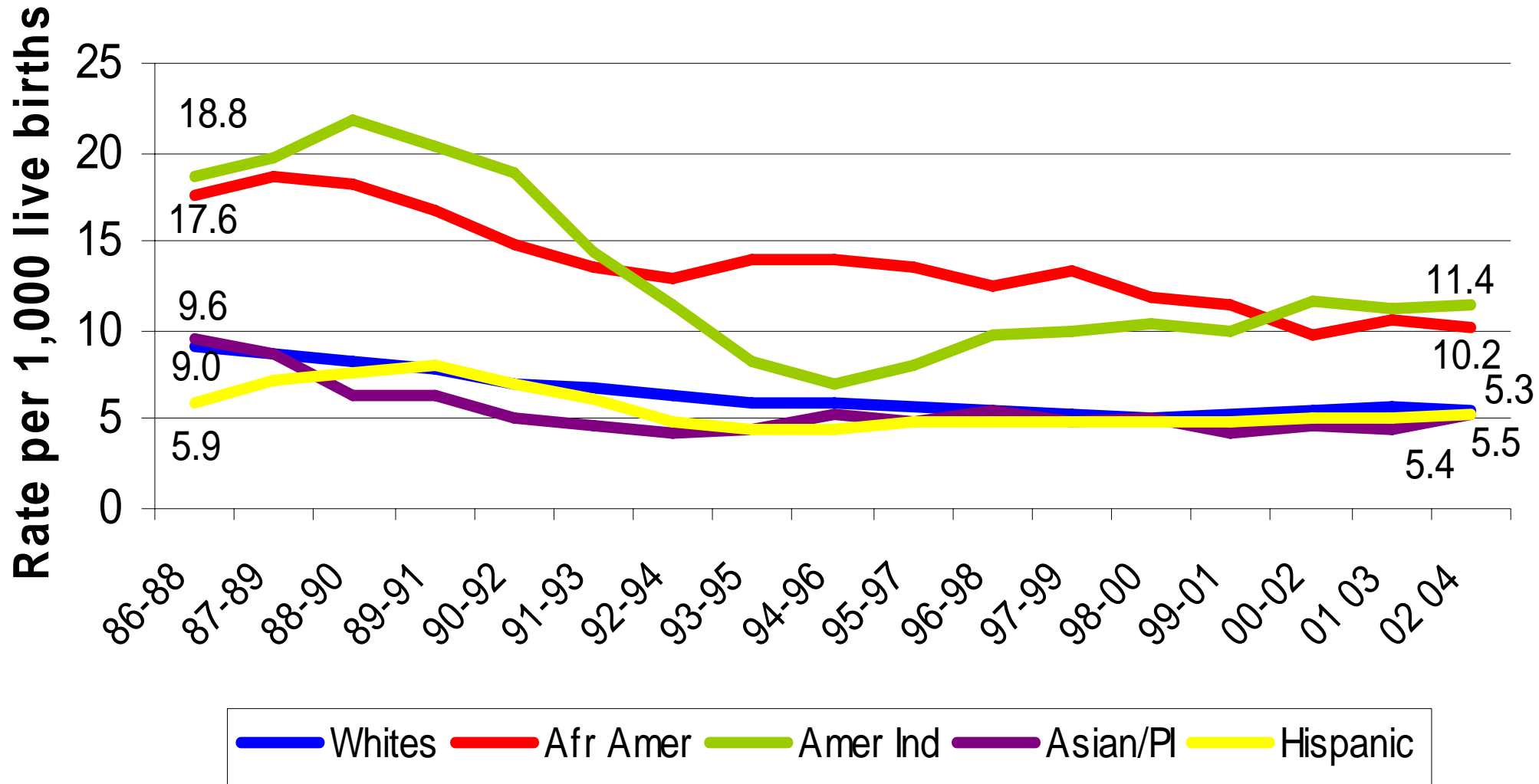


## Infant Mortality Rates by Race/Ethnicity, WA and US, 2001-2003



Source: Mathews, 2006

# Infant Mortality Rate by Race/Ethnicity WA, 3 Yr Rolling Avg, 1986-2004



## What Do Infants Die From?

Rank	Cause	# Deaths	
		2002-2004	Percent
1	Congenital Malformations	341	25
2	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome	171	13
3	Prematurity	174	13
4	Maternal Complications of Pregnancy	77	6
5	Unintentional Injury (Accident)	48	4
6	Complic. of Placenta, Cord & Membranes	47	3
7	Bacterial Sepsis of Newborn	35	3
8	Intrauterine Hypoxia & Birth Asphyxia )	33	2
9	Respiratory Distress of Newborn	33	2
10	Neonatal Hemorrhage	26	2
	All Other Causes	365	27
	TOTAL	1,350	100%

48%

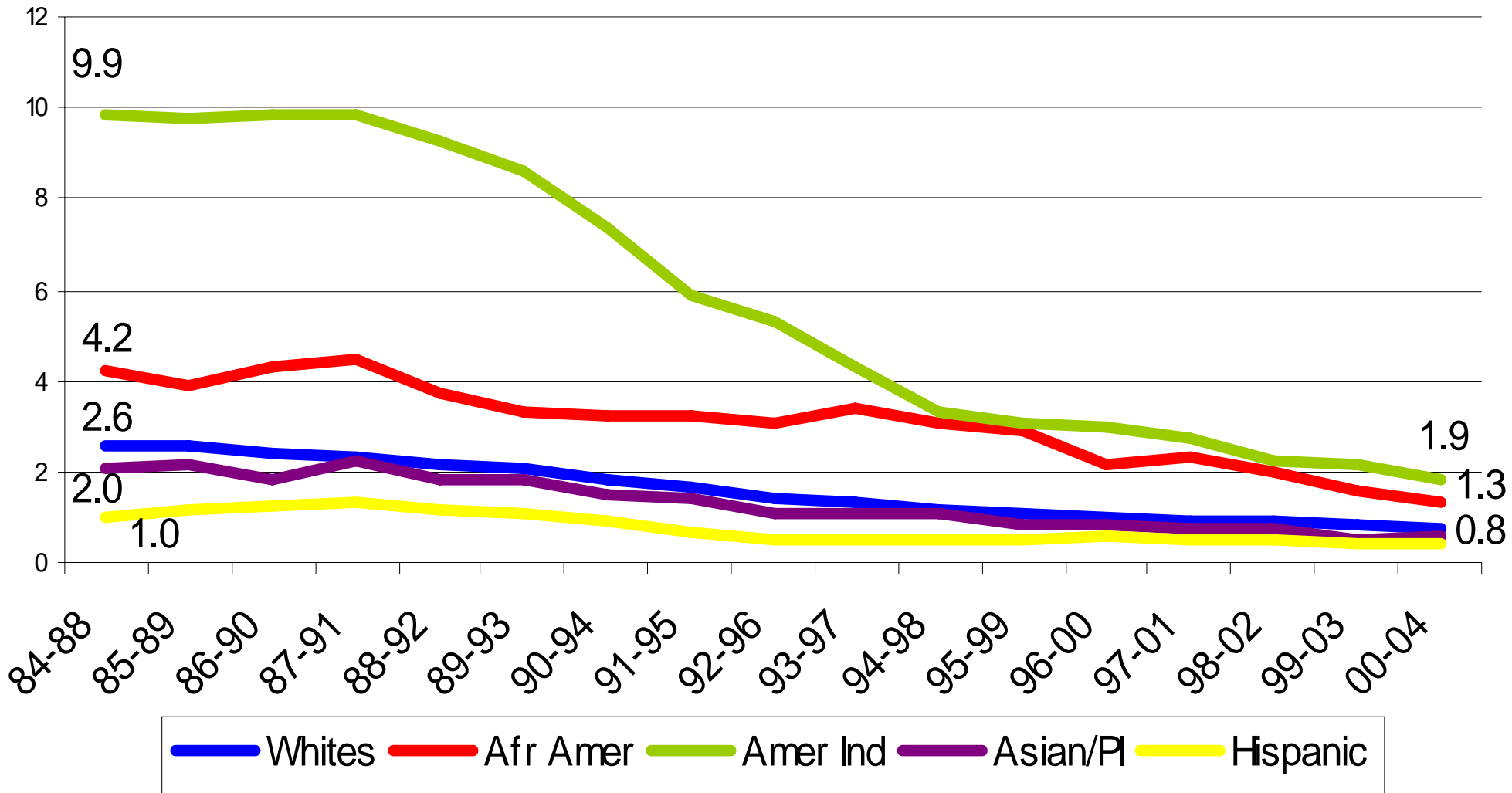
## Congenital Malformations

- Overall, mortality rate has dropped about 33% since mid 80's
- Folic Acid shown to prevent neural tube defects and possibly other malformations
- Little race/ethnic differences currently observed

# SIDS Mortality Rate by Race/Ethnicity

## 5 Yr Rolling Avg, 1986-2004

Deaths per 1,000 Live births



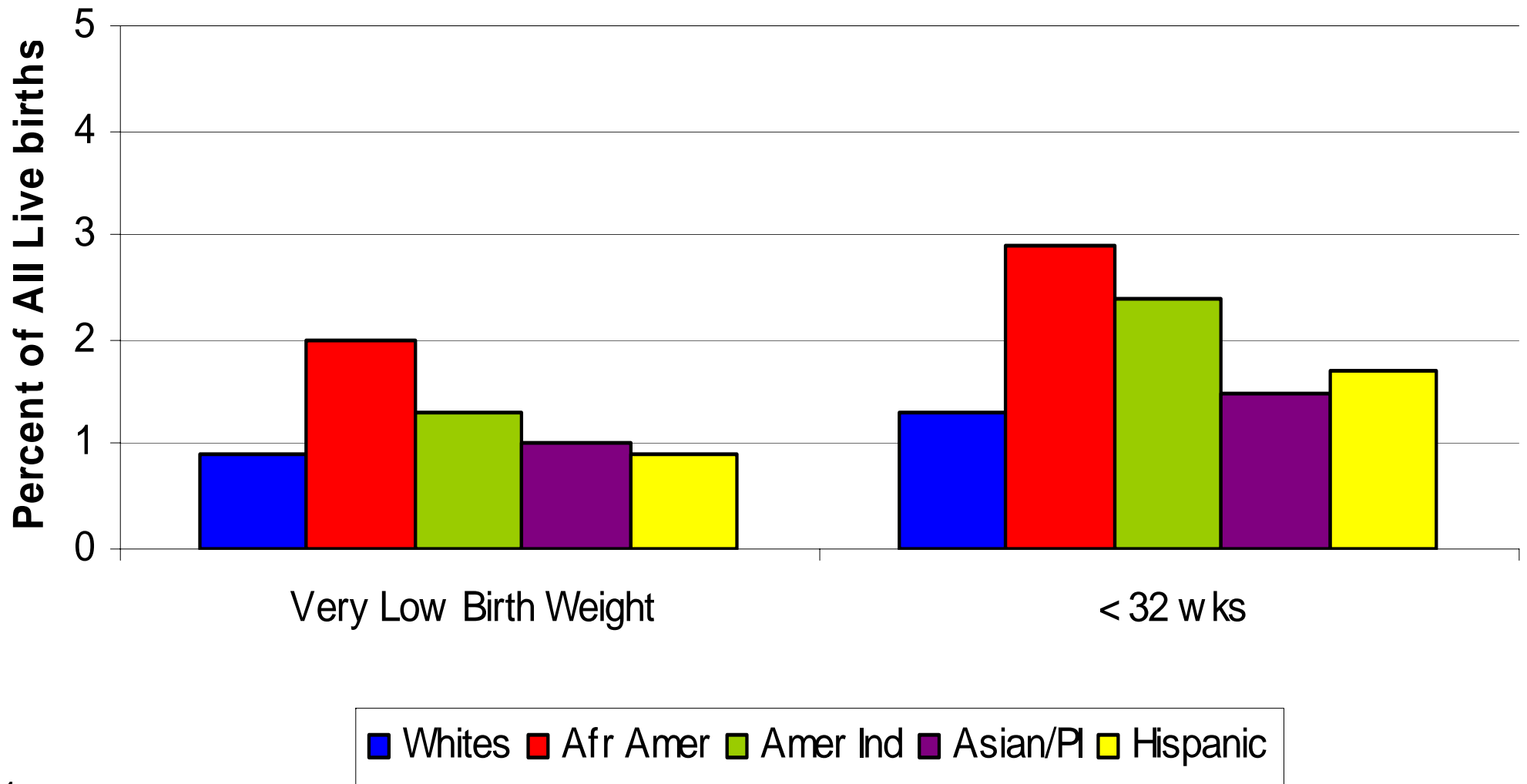


## Prematurity

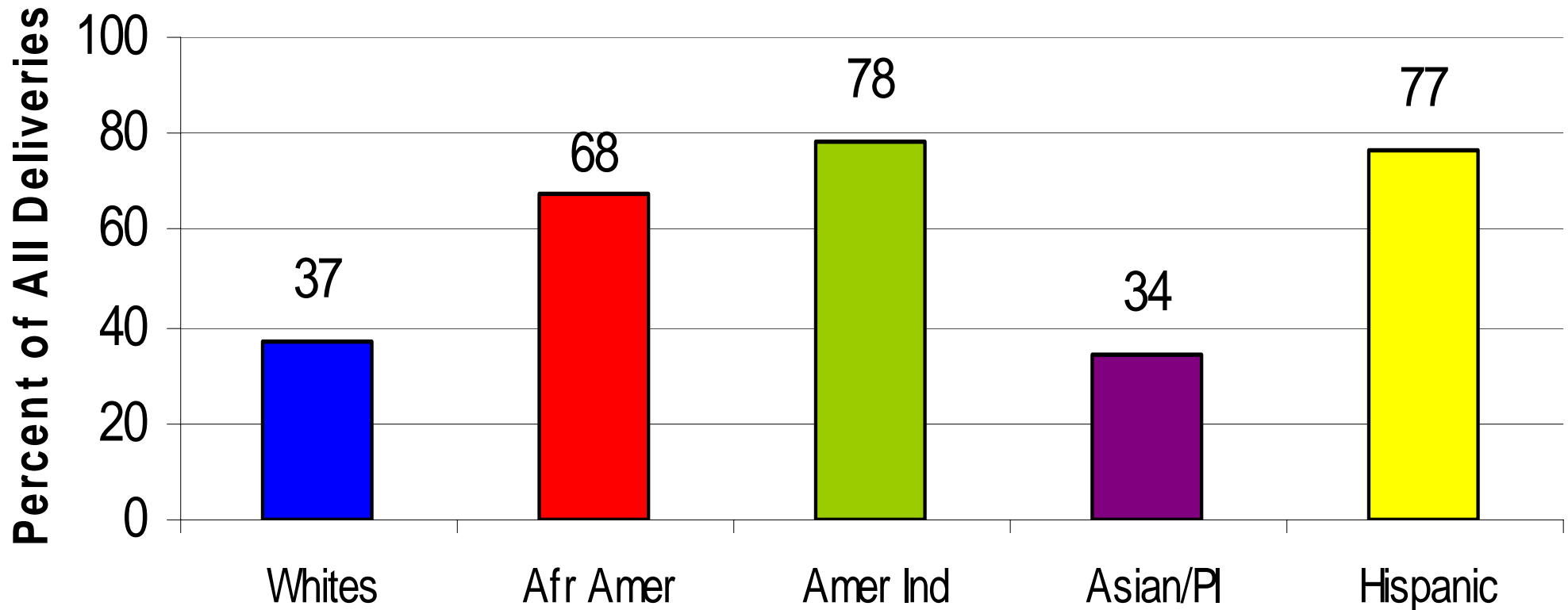
- Mortality rate has been constant since mid 80's
- African Americans experience a 3-fold increased risk of infant death due to prematurity compared to Non-Hispanic whites
- Increased risk for African Americans is due to
  - higher prevalence of very low birth weight infants being born
  - higher mortality among those births

## Factors that Put Infants at Increased Risk of Dying in the First Year of Life

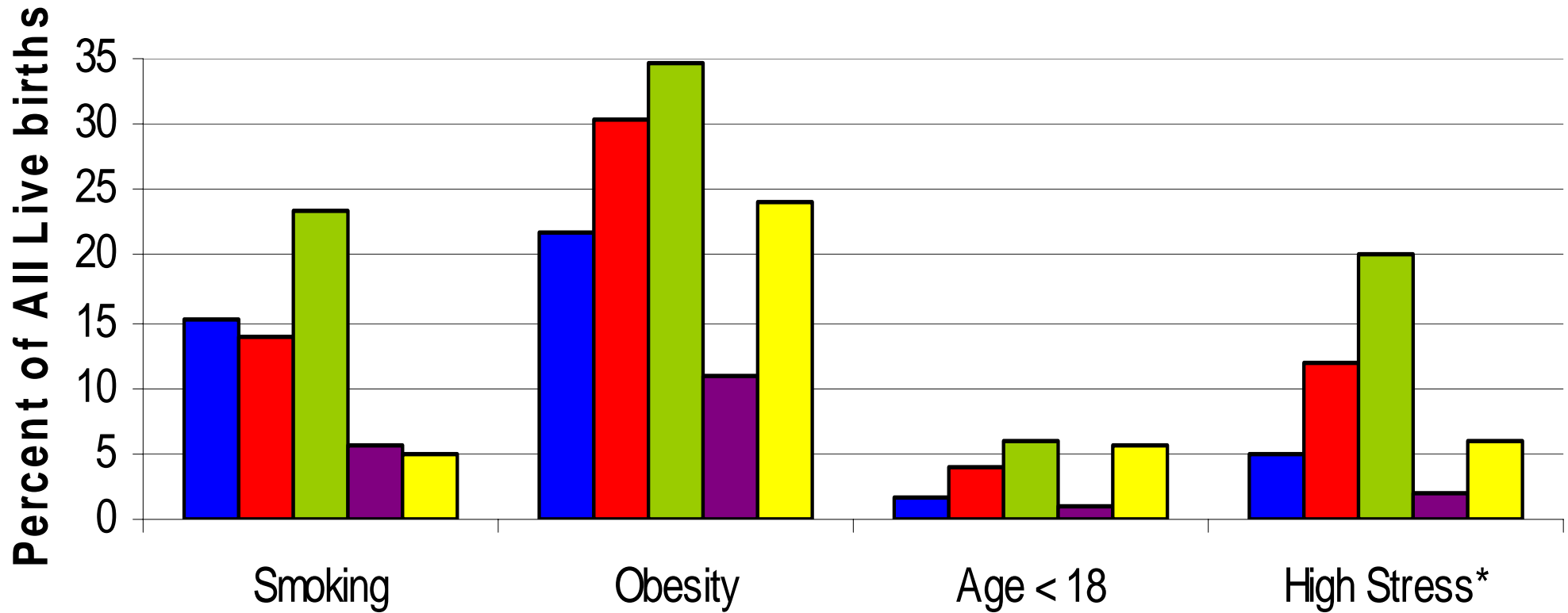
# Very Low Birth Weight and Very Preterm Birth by Race/Ethnicity, WA 2003-2005



# **Socioeconomic Status as Measured by Medicaid Coverage of Prenatal Care/Delivery by Race/ethnicity, WA 2003-2005**



# Risk Factors Among Livebirths, WA 2003-2005



\*2002-2004

■ Whites ■ Afr Amer ■ Amer Ind ■ Asian/PI ■ Hispanic

## Healthier women have healthier babies

- Risk Factors for Infant Mortality indicate race/ethnic disparities in prepregnancy health status
- Prenatal care is not enough
- Preconception care may help women attain optimal health prior to pregnancy

## Summary

- African Americans and American Indians in Washington experience about twice the infant mortality that Non-Hispanic Whites experience
- Race/ethnic disparities in infant mortality vary by underlying cause of death
- African American and American Indian women begin pregnancy less healthy. Improving their overall health may lead to reductions in infant mortality disparities.

## Contact Information

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